

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

SEISMIC UPGRADE MAKES MOUNT DOUGLAS SECONDARY SAFER

VICTORIA – The Province has approved nearly \$9.5 million to make Mount Douglas secondary school safer in the event of an earthquake, Oak Bay-Gordon Head MLA Ida Chong announced today.

“This school has been an integral part of the Gordon Head neighbourhood for nearly 50 years, and this upgrade will help it remain the heart of our community for many more years to come,” said Chong. “The extensive seismic upgrade will make the school safer for students and staff.”

The upgrade will involve constructing two new concrete support structures at the end of the classroom wings, rebuilding the main entrance lobby, and connecting these new elements with steel beams. Existing concrete block walls will be reinforced by connecting them to the new steel beams, grouting reinforcing bars, and constructing new shear walls.

“This upgrade is a major part of our \$1.5-billion seismic program to provide students and staff across B.C. with safer schools,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “We are the first government in B.C. to make such a major investment in student safety.”

Mount Douglas secondary school is one of five Greater Victoria schools approved for structural seismic upgrades totalling \$20 million. The upgrade at Gordon Head middle school was completed in September 2006.

“We’re very pleased to see this important seismic work move forward,” said Greater Victoria school board chair Michael McEvoy. “By working in partnership with the Province we’re able to make the most efficient use of resources to maximize safety benefits for our students.”

The upgrades help fulfil a government platform and throne speech commitment.

Since 2001, the Province has invested \$37.4 million in the Greater Victoria school district to complete 12 capital projects, and another \$1.6 million to complete the seismic upgrade at Gordon Head middle school.

During the same period, the Province spent over \$1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 31 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovations projects across British Columbia. Since 2001, 67 seismic projects have been completed, are under construction or have finished feasibility studies. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than \$2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects.

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